

**Abstract**

The present invention relates to an apparatus and a method for providing failover operation of a communication link in a data communications network. In one embodiment the invention comprises a method for providing failover protection in a  
5 bidirectional data communication network, comprising the steps of: sending data from the first device to a second device, together with a first source identifier; detecting the source identifier of all data received by the first device; and, determining when either the source identifier of data received by the first device equals the source identifier of data sent by the first device or when the source identifier of data received by the first  
10 device does not equal a preset value, that a failure has occurred in a first communications link and in response to the failure deactivating the first communications link, and activating a second communications link.